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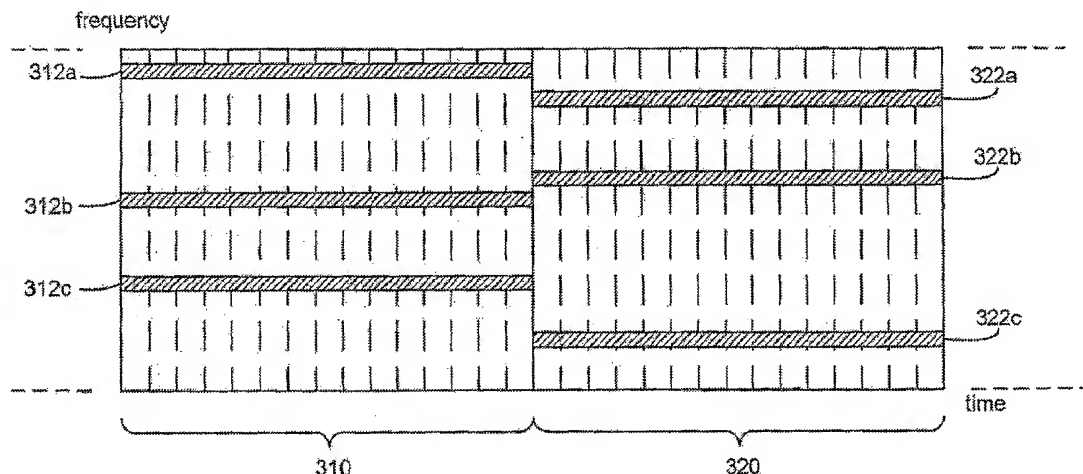
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(54) Title: RESOURCE ALLOCATION FOR SHARED SIGNALING CHANNELS

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(57) Abstract: A shared signaling channel can be used in an Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiple Access (OFDMA) communication system to provide signaling, acknowledgement, and power control messages to access terminals within the system. The shared signaling channel may comprise reserved logical resources that can be assigned to subcarriers, OFDM symbols, or combinations thereof.

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RESOURCE ALLOCATION FOR SHARED SIGNALING CHANNELS

Claim of Priority under 35 U.S.C. §120

[0001] The present Application claims priority to U.S. Patent Application No. 11/261,158 entitled "SHARED SIGNALING CHANNEL," filed on October 27, 2005, which is hereby expressly incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND

Field of the Disclosure

[0002] The disclosure relates to the field of wireless communications. More particularly, the disclosure relates to resources allocation for a shared signaling channel in a wireless communication system.

Description of Related Art

[0003] Wireless communication systems can be configured as multiple access communication systems. In such systems, the communication system can concurrently support multiple users across a predefined set of resources. Communication devices can establish a link in the communication system by requesting access and receiving an access grant.

[0004] The resources the wireless communication system grants to the requesting communication device depends, largely, on the type of multiple access system implemented. For example, multiple access systems can allocate resources on the basis of time, frequency, code space, or some combination of factors.

[0005] The wireless communication system needs to communicate the allocated resources and track them to ensure that two or more communication devices are not allocated overlapping resources, such that the communication links to the communication devices are not degraded. Additionally, the wireless communication system needs to track the allocated resources in order to track the resources that are released or otherwise available when a communication link is terminated.

[0006] The wireless communication system typically allocates resources to communication devices and the corresponding communication links in a centralized manner, such as from a centralized communication device. The resources allocated, and in some cases de-allocated, need to be communicated to the communication devices. Typically, the wireless communication system dedicates one or more communication channels for the transmission of the resource allocation and associated overhead.

[0007] However, the amount of resources allocated to the overhead channels typically detracts from the resources and corresponding capacity of the wireless communication system. Resource allocation is an important aspect of the communication system and care needs to be taken to ensure that the channels allocated to resource allocation are robust. However, the wireless communication system needs to balance the need for a robust resource allocation channel with the need to minimize the adverse effects on the communication channels.

[0008] It is desirable to configure resource allocation channels that provide robust communications, yet introduce minimal degradation of system performance.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0009] A shared signaling channel can be used in a wireless communication system to provide signaling messages to access terminals within the system. The shared signaling channel can be assigned to a predetermined number of sub-carriers within any frame. The assignment of a predetermined number of sub-carriers to the shared signaling channel establishes a fixed bandwidth overhead for the channel. The actual sub-carriers assigned to the channel can be varied periodically, and can vary according to a predetermined frequency hopping schedule. The amount of signal power allocated to the signaling channel can vary on a per symbol basis depending on the power requirements of the communication link. The shared signaling channel can direct each message carried on the channel to one or more access terminals. Unicast or otherwise directed messages allow the channel power to be controlled per the needs of individual communication links.

[0010] The disclosure includes a method of generating control channel messages in a wireless communication system. The method comprises assigning logical control

channel resources to physical channel resources, wherein the logical control channel resources are distinct from logical traffic channel resources assigned for data transmission and the physical channel resources correspond to combinations of sub-carriers and OFDM symbols. The method also comprises generating and encoding the at least one message, and then transmitting the at least one message on at least a portion of the physical channel resources. The above method may also be embodied in separate means structures.

[0011] The disclosure also includes apparatus configured to generate signaling channel messages comprising a scheduler configured to assign logical signaling channel resources to physical channel resources, wherein the logical control channel resources are distinct from logical traffic channel resources assigned to traffic channels that are assigned for data transmission and the physical channel resources correspond to combinations of sub-carriers and OFDM symbols. The apparatus also includes a signaling module configured to generate at least one signaling message and a transmitter configured to transmit the at least one signaling message utilizing at least some of the subcarriers and OFDM symbols that are assigned to the logical signaling channel resources.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] The features, objects, and advantages of aspects of the disclosure will become more apparent from the detailed description set forth below when taken in conjunction with the drawings, in which like elements bear like reference numerals.

[0013] Figure 1 is a simplified functional block diagram of aspects of a communication system having a shared signaling channel.

[0014] Figure 2 is a simplified functional block diagram of aspects of a transmitter supporting a shared signaling channel.

[0015] Figure 3 is a simplified time-frequency diagram of aspects of a shared signaling channel.

[0016] Figure 4 illustrates aspects of a method of generating signaling messages in a communication system with a shared signaling channel.

[0017] Figure 5 illustrates aspects of another method of generating signaling messages in a communication system with a shared signaling channel.

[0018] Figure 6 illustrates aspects of a simplified apparatus for generating signaling messages in a communication system with a shared signaling channel.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0019] A shared signaling channel (SSCH) in an OFDMA wireless communication system can be used to communicate various signaling and feedback messages implemented within the system. The wireless communication system can implement a SSCH as one of a plurality of forward link communication channels. The SSCH can be simultaneously or concurrently shared among a plurality of access terminals within the communication system.

[0020] The wireless communication system can communicate various signaling messages in a forward link SSCH. For example, the wireless communication system can include access grant messages, forward link assignment messages, reverse link assignment messages, as well as any other signaling messages that may be communicated on a forward link channel.

[0021] The SSCH can also be used to communicate feedback messages to access terminals. The feedback messages can include acknowledgement (ACK) messages confirming successful receipt of access terminal transmissions. The feedback messages can also include reverse link power control messages that are used to instruct a transmitting access terminal to vary the transmit power.

[0022] The actual channels utilized in an SSCH may be all or some of the ones described above. Additionally, other channels may be included in SSCH in addition or in lieu of, any of the above channels.

[0023] The wireless communication system can allocate a predetermined number of sub-carriers, OFDM symbols, or combinations thereof to the SSCH. Assigning a predetermined number of sub-carriers, OFDM symbols, or combinations thereof to the SSCH establishes a bandwidth overhead for the channel. The actual sub-carriers,

OFDM symbols, or combinations thereof assigned to the SSCH can be varied periodically, and can vary according to a predetermined frequency hopping schedule. In certain aspects, the identity of the sub-carriers, OFDM symbols, or combinations thereof assigned to the SSCH can vary across each frame.

[0024] The amount of power that is allocated to the SSCH can vary depending on the requirements of the communication link carrying the SSCH message. For example, the SSCH power can be increased when the SSCH messages are transmitted to a distant access terminal. Conversely, the SSCH power can be decreased when the SSCH messages are transmitted to a nearby access terminal. If there is no SSCH message to be transmitted, the SSCH need not be allocated any power. Because the power allocated to the SSCH can be varied on a per user basis when unicast messaging is implemented, the SSCH requires a relatively low power overhead. The power allocated to the SSCH increases only as needed by the particular communication link.

[0025] The amount of interference that the SSCH contributes to the data channels for the various access terminals can vary based on the sub-carriers assigned to the SSCH and the access terminals, as well as the relative power levels of the SSCH and the data channels. The SSCH contributes substantially no interference for many communication links.

[0026] Figure 1 is a simplified functional block diagram of aspects of a wireless communication system 100 implementing a SSCH on the forward link. The system 100 includes one or more fixed elements that can be in communication with one or more access terminals 110a-110b. Although the description of the system 100 of Figure 1 generally describes a wireless telephone system or a wireless data communication system, the system 100 is not limited to implementation as a wireless telephone system or a wireless data communication system nor is the system 100 limited to having the particular elements shown in Figure 1.

[0027] An access terminal 110a typically communicates with one or more base stations 120a or 120b, here depicted as sectorized cellular towers. Other aspects of the system 100 may include access points in place of the base stations 120a and 120b. In such a system 100, the BSC 130 and MSC 140 may be omitted and may be replaced with one or more switches, hubs, or routers.

[0028] As used herein, a base station may be a fixed station used for communicating with the terminals and may also be referred to as, and include some or all the functionality of, an access point, a Node B, or some other terminology. An access terminal may also be referred to as, and include some or all the functionality of, a user equipment (UE), a wireless communication device, terminal, a mobile station or some other terminology.

[0029] The access terminal 110a will typically communicate with the base station, for example 120b that provides the strongest signal strength at a receiver within the access terminal 110a. A second access terminal 110b can also be configured to communicate with the same base station 120b. However, the second access terminal 110b may be distant from the base station 120b, and may be on the edge of a coverage area served by the base station 120b.

[0030] The one or more base stations 120a-120b can be configured to schedule the channel resources used in the forward link, reverse link, or both links. Each base station, 120a-120b, can communicate sub-carrier assignments, acknowledgement messages, reverse link power control messages, and other overhead messages using the SSCH.

[0031] Each of the base stations 120a and 120b can be coupled to a Base Station Controller (BSC) 140 that routes the communication signals to and from the appropriate base stations 120a and 120b. The BSC 140 is coupled to a Mobile Switching Center (MSC) 150 that can be configured to operate as an interface between the access terminals 110a-110b and a Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) 150. In other aspects, the system 100 can implement a Packet Data Serving Node (PDSN) in place or in addition to the PSTN 150. The PDSN can operate to interface a packet switched network, such as network 160, with the wireless portion of the system 100. In certain aspects, system 100 need not utilize a PSTN 150 and the MSC 140 may be coupled to the network 160 directly. In additional aspects, both the MSC 140 and PSTN 150 may be omitted and BSC 130 and/or base stations 120 may be coupled directly to a packet based or circuit switched network 160.

[0032] The MSC 150 can also be configured to operate as an interface between the access terminals 110a-110b and a network 160. The network 160 can be, for example, a

Local Area Network (LAN) or a Wide Area Network (WAN). In certain aspects, the network 160 includes the Internet. Therefore, the MSC 150 is coupled to the PSTN 150 and network 160. The MSC 150 can also be configured to coordinate inter-system handoffs with other communication systems (not shown).

[0033] The wireless communication system 100 can be configured as an OFDMA system with communications in both the forward link and reverse link utilizing OFDM communications. The term forward link refers to the communication link from the base stations 120a or 120b to the access terminals 110a-110b, and the term reverse link refers to the communication link from the access terminals 110a-110b to the base stations 120a or 120b. Both the base stations 120a and 120b and the access terminals 110a-110b may allocate resources for channel and interference estimation.

[0034] The base stations, 120a and 120b, and the access terminal 110 can be configured to broadcast a pilot signal for purposes of channel and interference estimation. The pilot signal can include broadband pilots, a collection of narrow band pilots that span the overall spectrum, or combinations thereof.

[0035] The wireless communication system 100 can include a set of sub-carriers, alternatively referred to as tones that span an operating bandwidth of the OFDMA system. Typically, the sub-carriers are equally spaced. The wireless communication system 100 may allocate one or more sub-carriers as guard bands, and the system 100 may not utilize the sub-carriers within the guard bands for communications with the access terminals 110a-110b.

[0036] In certain aspects, the wireless communication system 100 can include 2048 sub-carriers spanning an operating frequency band of 20 MHz, which may be divided into independent carriers each housing a fixed portion of the 20 MHz with its own SSCH and other resources. A guard band having a bandwidth substantially equal to the bandwidth occupied by one or more sub-carriers can be allocated on each end of the operating band.

[0037] The wireless communication system 100 can be configured to Frequency Division Duplex (FDD) the forward and reverse links. In a FDD aspect, the forward link is frequency offset from the reverse link. Therefore, forward link sub-carriers are frequency offset from the reverse link sub-carriers. Typically, the frequency offset is

fixed, such that the forward link channels are separated from the reverse link sub-carriers by a predetermined frequency offset. The forward link and reverse link may communicate simultaneously, or concurrently, using FDD.

[0038] In another aspect, the wireless communication system 100 can be configured to Time Division Duplex (TDD) the forward and reverse links. In such an aspect, the forward link and reverse links can share the same sub-carriers, and the wireless communication system 100 can alternate between forward and reverse link communications over predetermined time intervals. In TDD, the allocated frequency channels are identical between the forward and reverse links, but the times allocated to the forward and reverse links are distinct. A channel estimate performed on a forward or reverse link channel is typically accurate for the complementary reverse or forward link channel because of reciprocity.

[0039] The wireless communication system 100 can also implement an interlacing format in one or both the forward and reverse links. Interlacing is a form of time division multiplexing in which the communication link timing is cyclically assigned to one of a predetermined number of interlace periods. A particular communication link to one of the access terminals, for example 110a, can be assigned to one of the interlace periods, and communications over the particular assigned communication link occurs only during the assigned interlace period. For example, the wireless communication system 100 can implement an interlace period of six. Each interlace period, identified 1-6, has a predetermined duration. Each interlace period occurs periodically with a period of six. Thus, a communication link assigned to a particular interlace period is active once every six periods.

[0040] Interlaced communications are particularly useful in wireless communication systems 100 implementing an automatic repeat request architecture, such as a Hybrid Automatic Repeat Request (HARQ) algorithm. The wireless communication system 100 can implement a HARQ architecture to process data retransmission. In such a system, a transmitter may send an initial transmission at a first data rate and may automatically retransmit the data if no acknowledgement message is received. The transmitter can send subsequent retransmissions at lower data rates. HARQ incremental redundancy retransmission schemes can improve system performance in terms of providing early termination gain and robustness.

[0041] The interlace format allows sufficient time for processing of the ACK messages prior to the next occurring assigned interlace period. For example, an access terminal 110a can receive transmitted data and transmit an acknowledgement message, and a base station 120b can receive and process the acknowledgement message in time to prevent retransmission at the next occurring interlace period. Alternatively, if the base station 120b fails to receive the ACK message, the base station 120b can retransmit the data at the next occurring interlace period assigned to the access terminal 110a.

[0042] The base stations 120a-120b can transmit the SSCH messages in each interlace, but may limit the messages occurring in each interlace to those messages intended for access terminals 110a-110b assigned to that particular active interlace. The base stations 120a-120b can limit the amount of SSCH messages that need to be scheduled in each interlace period.

[0043] The wireless communication system 100 can implement a Frequency Division Multiplex (FDM) SSCH in the forward link for the communication of signaling and feedback messages. Each base station 120a-120b can allocate a predetermined, or variable, number of sub-carriers, OFDM symbols, or combinations thereof to the SSCH. In other aspects, only logical resources may be assigned to the SSCH and those resources then mapped according to a mapping scheme, which may be the same or different as the mapping scheme for traffic channels. The wireless communication system 100 can be configured to allocate a fixed, or variable, bandwidth overhead to the SSCH. Each base station 120a-120b can allocate a predetermined percentage, with a minimum and maximum, of its physical channel resources, e.g. sub-carriers, OFDM symbols, or combinations thereof, to the SSCH. Additionally, each base station 120a or 120b may allocate a different set of physical channel resources to the SSCH. For example, each base station 120a or 120b can be configured to allocate approximately 10% of the physical channel resources to the SSCH.

[0044] Each base station, for example 120b, can allocate logical resources in the form a plurality of nodes from a channel tree to the SSCH. The channel tree is a channel model that can include a plurality of branches that eventually terminate in leaf or base nodes. Each node in the tree can be labeled, and each node identifies every node and base node beneath it. A leaf or base node of the tree can correspond to the smallest assignable logical resource, such as a single sub-carrier, OFDM symbol, or a

combination of a sub-carrier and OFDM symbol. Thus, the channel tree provides a logical map for assigning and tracking the available physical channel resources in the wireless communication system 100.

[0045] The base station 120b can map the nodes from the channel tree to physical channel resources used in the forward and reverse links. For example, the base station 120b can allocate a predetermined number of resources to the SSCH by assigning a corresponding number of base nodes from a channel tree to the SSCH. The base station 120b can map the logical node assignment to a physical channel resources assignment that ultimately is transmitted by base station 120b.

[0046] It may be advantageous to use the logical channel tree structure or some other logical structure to track the resources assigned to the SSCH when the physical channel resource assignments can change. For example, the base stations 120a-120b can implement a frequency hopping algorithm for the SSCH as well as other channels, such as data channels. The base stations 120a-120b can implement a pseudorandom frequency hopping scheme for each assigned sub-carrier. The base stations 120a-120b can use the frequency hopping algorithm to map the logical nodes from the channel tree to corresponding physical channel resource assignments.

[0047] The frequency hopping algorithm can perform frequency hopping on a symbol basis or a block basis. Symbol rate frequency hopping can frequency hop each individual sub-carrier distinct from any other sub-carrier, except that no two nodes are assigned to the same physical sub-carrier. In block hopping, a contiguous block of sub-carriers can be configured to frequency hop in a manner that maintains the contiguous block structure. In terms of the channel tree, a branch node that is higher than a leaf node can be assigned to a hopping algorithm. The base nodes under the branch node can follow the hopping algorithm applied to the branch node.

[0048] The base station 120a-120b can perform frequency hopping on a periodic basis, such as each frame, a number of frames, or some other predetermined number of OFDM symbols. As used herein, a frame refers to a predetermined structure of OFDM symbols, which may include one or more preamble symbols and one or more data symbols. The receiver can be configured to utilize the same frequency hopping

algorithm to determine which sub-carriers are assigned to the SSCH or a corresponding data channel.

[0049] The base stations 120a-120b can modulate each of the sub-carriers assigned to the SSCH with the SSCH messages. The messages can include signaling messages and feedback messages. The signaling messages can include access grant messages, forward link assignment block messages, and reverse link block assignment messages. The feedback messages can include acknowledgement (ACK) messages and reverse link power control messages. The actual channels utilized in an SSCH may be all or some of the ones described above. Additionally, other channels may be included in SSCH in addition or in lieu of, any of the above channels.

[0050] The access grant message is used by the base station 120b to acknowledge an access attempt by an access terminal 110a and assign a Media Access Control Identification (MACID). The access grant message can also include an initial reverse link channel assignment. The sequence of modulation symbols corresponding to the access grant can be scrambled according to an index of the preceding access probe transmitted by the access terminal 110a. This scrambling enables the access terminal 110a to respond only to access grant blocks that correspond to the probe sequence that it transmitted.

[0051] The base station 120b can use the forward and reverse link access block messages to provide forward or reverse link sub-carrier assignments. The assignment messages can also include other parameters, such as modulation format, coding format, and packet format. The base station typically provides a channel assignment to a particular access terminal 110a, and can identify the target recipient using an assigned MACID.

[0052] The base stations 120a-120b typically transmit the ACK messages to particular access terminals 110a-110b in response to successful receipt of a transmission. Each ACK message can be as simple as a one-bit message indicating positive or negative acknowledgement. An ACK message can be linked to each sub-carrier, e.g. by using related nodes in a channel tree to others for that access terminal, or can be linked to a particular MACID. Further, the ACK messages may be encoded over multiple packets for the purposes of diversity.

[0053] The base stations 120a-120b can transmit reverse link power control messages to control the power density of reverse link transmissions from each of the access terminals 110a-110b. The base station 120a-120b can transmit the reverse power control message to command the access terminal 110a-110b to increase or decrease its power density.

[0054] The base stations 120a-120b can be configured to unicast each of the SSCH messages individually to particular access terminals 110a-110b. In unicast messaging, each message is modulated and power controlled independently from other messages. Alternatively, messages directed to a particular user can be combined and independently modulated and power controlled.

[0055] In another aspect, the base stations 120a-120b can be configured to combine the messages for multiple access terminals 110a-110b and multi-cast the combined message to the multiple access terminals 110a-110b. In multicast, messages for multiple access terminals can be grouped in jointly encoded and power controlled sets. The power control for the jointly encoded messages needs to target the access terminal having the worst communication link. Thus, if the messages for two access terminals 110a and 110b are combined, the base station 120b sets the power control of the combined message to ensure that the access terminal 110a having the worst link receives the transmission. However, the level of power needed to ensure the worst communication link is satisfied may be substantially greater than required for an access terminal 110b at a close proximity to the base station 120b. Therefore, in some aspects SSCH messages may be jointly encoded and power controlled for those access terminals having substantially similar channel characteristics, e.g. SNRs, power offsets, etc.

[0056] In another aspect, the base stations 120a-120b can group all of the message information for all access terminals 110a-110b served by a base station, for example 120b, and broadcast the combined message to all of the access terminals 110a-110b. In the broadcast approach, all messages are jointly coded and modulated while power control targets the access terminal with the worst forward link signal strength.

[0057] Unicast signaling may be advantageous in those situations where multicast and broadcast require substantial power overhead to reach cell edge for a substantial number of bits. Unicast messages may benefit from power sharing between access terminals

with different forward link signal strength through power control. Unicast messaging also benefits from the fact that many reverse link base nodes may not be assigned at any given point in time so that no energy needs to be expended reporting an ACK for those nodes.

[0058] From the MAC logic standpoint, unicast design enables the wireless communication system 100 to scramble ACK messages with the target MACID, preventing an access terminal that erroneously thinks that it is assigned the relevant resources targeted by the ACK (via assignment signaling errors such as missed de-assignment) from falsely interpreting the ACK that is actually intended for another MACID. Thus, such an access terminal will recover from the erroneous assignment state after a single packet since that packet cannot be positively acknowledged, and the access terminal will expire the erroneous assignment.

[0059] From the link performance standpoint, the main advantage of broadcast or multicast methods is coding gain due to joint encoding. However, the gain of power control exceeds substantially coding gain for practical geometry distributions. Also, unicast messaging can exhibit higher error rates compared to jointly encoded and CRC protected messages. However, practically achievable error rates of 0.01% to 0.1% are satisfactory.

[0060] It may be advantageous for the base stations 120a-120b to multicast or broadcast some messages while unicasting others. For example, an assignment message can be configured to automatically de-assign resources from the access terminal that is currently using resources corresponding to the sub-carriers indicated in the assignment message. Hence, assignment messages are often multicast since they target both the intended recipient of the assignment as well as any current users of the resources specified in the assignment message.

[0061] Figure 2 is a simplified functional block diagram of an aspect of an OFDMA transmitter 200 such as can be incorporated within a base station of the wireless communication system of Figure 1. The transmitter 200 is configured to transmit one or more OFDMA signals to one or more access terminals. The transmitter 200 includes a SSCH module 230 configured to generate and implement a SSCH in the forward link.

[0062] The transmitter 200 includes a data buffer 210 configured to store data destined for one or more access terminals. The data buffer 210 can be configured, for example, to hold the data destined for each of the access terminals in a coverage area supported by the corresponding base station.

[0063] The data can be, for example, raw unencoded data or encoded data. Typically, the data stored in the data buffer 210 is unencoded, and is coupled to an encoder 212 where it is encoded according to a desired encoding rate. The encoder 212 can include encoding for error detection and Forward Error Correction (FEC). The data in the data buffer 210 can be encoded according to one or more encoding algorithms. Each of the encoding algorithms and resultant coding rates can be associated with a particular data format of a multiple format Hybrid Automatic Repeat Request (HARQ) system. The encoding can include, but is not limited to, convolutional coding, block coding, interleaving, direct sequence spreading, cyclic redundancy coding, and the like, or some other coding.

[0064] The encoded data to be transmitted is coupled to a serial to parallel converter and signal mapper 214 that is configured to convert a serial data stream from the encoder 212 to a plurality of data streams in parallel. The signal mapper 214 can determine the number of sub-carriers and the identity of the sub-carriers for each access terminal based on input provided by a scheduler (not shown). The number of carriers allocated to any particular access terminal may be a subset of all available carriers. Therefore, the signal mapper 214 maps data destined for a particular access terminal to those parallel data streams corresponding to the data carriers allocated to that access terminal.

[0065] A SSCH module 230 is configured to generate the SSCH messages, encode the messages, and provide the encoded messages to the signal mapper 214. The SSCH module 230 can also provide the identity of the sub-carriers assigned to the SSCH. The SSCH module 230 can include a scheduler 252 configured to determine and assign nodes from a channel tree to the SSCH. The output of the scheduler 252 can be coupled to a frequency hopping module 254. The frequency hopping module 254 can be configured to map the assigned channel tree nodes determined by the scheduler 252 to the physical sub-carrier assignments. The frequency hopping module 254 can implement a predetermined frequency hopping algorithm.

[0066] The signal mapper 214 receives the SSCH message symbols and sub-carrier assignments, and maps the SSCH symbols to the appropriate sub-carriers. In certain aspects, the SSCH module 230 can be configured to generate a serial message stream and the signal mapper 214 can be configured to map the serial message to the assigned sub-carriers.

[0067] In certain aspects, the signal mapper 214 can be configured to interleave each modulation symbol from the SSCH message across all of the assigned sub-carriers. Interleaving the modulation symbols for the SSCH provides the SSCH signal with the maximum frequency and interference diversity.

[0068] The output of the signal mapper 214 is coupled to a pilot module 220 that is configured to allocate a predetermined portion of the sub-carriers to a pilot signal. In certain aspects, the pilot signal can include a plurality of equally spaced sub-carriers spanning substantially the entire operating band. The pilot module 220 can be configured to modulate each of the carriers of the OFDMA system with a corresponding data or pilot signal.

[0069] In certain aspects, the SSCH symbols are used to BPSK modulate the assigned sub-carriers. In another aspect, the SSCH symbols are used to QPSK modulate the assigned sub-carriers. While practically any modulation type can be accommodated, it may be advantageous to use a modulation format that has a constellation that can be represented by a rotating phasor, because the magnitude does not vary as a function of the symbol. This may be beneficial because SSCH may then have different offsets but the same pilot references, and thereby be easier to demodulate.

[0070] The output of the pilot module 220 is coupled to an Inverse Fast Fourier Transform (IFFT) module 222. The IFFT module 222 is configured to transform the OFDMA carriers to corresponding time domain symbols. Of course, a Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) implementation is not a requirement, and a Discrete Fourier Transform (DFT) or some other type of transform can be used to generate the time domain symbols. The output of the IFFT module 222 is coupled to a parallel to serial converter 224 that is configured to convert the parallel time domain symbols to a serial stream.

[0071] The serial OFDMA symbol stream is coupled from the parallel to serial converter 224 to a transceiver 240. In the aspect shown in Figure 2, the transceiver 240 is a base station transceiver configured to transmit the forward link signals and receive reverse link signals.

[0072] The transceiver 240 includes a forward link transmitter module 244 that is configured to convert the serial symbol stream to an analog signal at an appropriate frequency for broadcast to access terminals via an antenna 246. The transceiver 240 can also include a reverse link receiver module 242 that is coupled to the antenna 246 and is configured to receive the signals transmitted by one or more remote access terminals.

[0073] The SSCH module 230 is configured to generate the SSCH messages. As described earlier, The SSCH messages can include signaling messages. Additionally, the SSCH messages can include feedback messages, such as ACK messages or power control messages. The SSCH module 230 is coupled to the output of the receiver module 242 and analyzes the received signals, in part, to generate the signaling and feedback messages.

[0074] The SSCH module 230 includes a signaling module 232, an ACK module 236, and a power control module 238. The signaling module 232 can be configured to generate the desired signaling messages and encode them according to the desired encoding. For example, the signaling module 232 can analyze the received signal for an access request and can generate an access grant message directed to the originating access terminal. The signaling module 232 can also generate and encode any forward link or reverse link block assignment messages.

[0075] Similarly, the ACK module 236 can generate ACK messages directed to access terminals for which a transmission was successfully received. The ACK module 236 can be configured to generate unicast, multicast, or broadcast messages, depending on the system configuration.

[0076] The power control module 238 can be configured to generate any reverse link power control messages based in part on the received signals. The power control module 238 can also be configured to generate the desired power control messages.

[0077] The power control module 238 can also be configured to generate the power control signals that control the power density of the SSCH messages. The SSCH

module 230 can power control individual unicast messages based on the needs of the destination access terminal. Additionally, the SSCH module 230 can be configured to power control the multicast or broadcast messages based on the weakest forward link signal strength reported by the access terminals. The power control module 238 can be configured to scale the encoded symbols from each of the modules within the SSCH module 230. In another aspect, the power control module 238 can be configured to provide control signals to the pilot module 220 to scale the desired SSCH symbols. The power control module 238 thus allows the SSCH module 230 to power control each of the SSCH messages according to its needs. This results in reduced power overhead for the SSCH.

[0078] It should be noted that one or more elements depicted in Fig. 2, may be integrated into a processor with integrated or and external memory module.

[0079] Figure 3 is a simplified time-frequency diagram 300 of an aspect of a shared signaling channel, such a channel generated by the SSCH module of the transmitter of Figure 2. The time frequency diagram 300 details the SSCH sub-carrier allocation for two successive frames, 310 and 320. The two successive frames 310 and 320 can represent the successive frames of an FDM system of a TDM system, although the successive frames in a TDM system may have one or more intervening frames allocated to reverse link access terminal transmissions (not shown).

[0080] The first frame 310 includes three frequency bands, 312a-312c, that can be representative of three separate sub-carriers assigned to the SSCH in the particular frame. The three sub-carrier assignments 312a-312c are shown as maintained over the entire duration of the frame 310. In some aspects, the sub-carrier assignments can change during the course of the frame 310. The number of times that the sub-carrier assignments can change during the course of a frame 310 is defined by the frequency hopping algorithm, and is typically less than the number of OFDM symbols in the frame 310.

[0081] In the aspect shown in Figure 3, the sub-carrier assignment changes on the frame boundary. The second, successive frame 320 also includes the same number of sub-carriers assigned to the SSCH as in the first frame 310. In certain aspects, the number of sub-carriers assigned to the SSCH is predetermined and fixed. For example,

the SSCH bandwidth overhead can be fixed to some predetermined level. In another aspect, the number of sub-carriers assigned to the SSCH is variable, and can be assigned by a system control message. Typically, the number of sub-carriers assigned to the SSCH does not vary at a high rate.

[0082] The sub-carriers mapped to the SSCH can be determined by a frequency hopping algorithm that maps a logical node assignment to a physical sub-carrier assignment. In the aspect shown in Figure 3, the three sub-carrier physical assignments 322a-322c are different in the second, successive frame 320. As before, the aspect depicts the sub-carrier assignments as stable for the entire length of the frame 320.

[0083] It should be noted that while Fig. 3 depicts an SSCH assigned to a number of contiguous OFDM symbols for one or more subcarriers. This need not be the case and the SSCH may be mapped in any fashion, e.g. in a symbol rate hopping fashion or blocks of adjacent subcarriers, OFDM symbols, or combinations thereof for one or more symbols. It should be noted that as depicted in Fig. 3, the schemes for allocating resources may be different for data and SSCH channels. Further, in the case that data transmissions are assigned to logical control channel resources, those assignments would be dropped, or otherwise not carried out at the base station.

[0084] Figure 4 illustrates aspects of a method 400 of generating signaling messages in a communication system with a shared signaling channel. The transmitter having the SSCH module as shown in Figure 2 can be configured to perform the method 400. The method 400 depicts the generation of one frame of SSCH messages. The method 400 can be repeated for additional frames.

[0085] The method 400 begins at block 410 where the SSCH module generates the signaling messages. The SSCH module can generate signaling messages in response to requests. For example, the SSCH module can generate access grant messages in response to access requests. Similarly, the SSCH module can generate forward link or reverse link assignment block messages in response to a link request or a request to transmit data.

[0086] The SSCH module proceeds to block 412 and encodes the signaling messages. The SSCH can be configured to generate unicast messages for particular message types, for example access grants. The SSCH module can be configured to identify a MACID

of a destination access terminal when formatting a unicast message. The SSCH module can encode the message and can generate a CRC code and append the CRC to the message. Additionally, the SSCH can be configured to combine the messages for several access terminals into a single multicast or broadcast message and encode the combined messages. The SSCH can, for example, include a MACID designated for broadcast messages. The SSCH can generate a CRC for the combined message and append the CRC to the encoded messages.

[0087] The SSCH module can, though need not, proceed to block 414 to power control the signaling messages. In certain aspects, the SSCH can adjust or otherwise scale the amplitude of the encoded messages. In another aspect, the SSCH module can direct a modulator to scale the amplitude of the symbols.

[0088] The SSCH module then may, though need not, perform similar operations for the generation of ACK and reverse link power control feedback messages. At block 420, the SSCH module generates the desired ACK messages based on received access terminal transmissions. The SSCH module proceeds to block 420 and encodes the ACK messages, for example, as unicast messages. The SSCH module proceeds to block 424 and adjusts the power of the ACK symbols.

[0089] The SSCH module proceeds to block 430 and generates reverse link power control messages based, for example, on the received signal strength of each individual access terminal transmission. The SSCH module proceeds to block 432 and encodes the power control messages, typically as unicast messages. The SSCH module proceeds to block 434 and adjusts the power of the reverse link power control message symbols.

[0090] The SSCH proceeds to block 440 and determines which logical resources, such as a channel tree, are assigned to the SSCH. The SSCH module proceeds to block 450 and maps the physical channel resources assignment to the assigned nodes. The SSCH module can use a frequency hopping algorithm to map the logical node assignment to the physical channel resource assignment. The frequency hopping algorithm can be such that the same node assignment can produce different physical channel resources assignments for different frames. The frequency hopper can thus provide a level of frequency diversity, as well as some level of interference diversity.

[0091] The SSCH proceeds to block 460 and maps the message symbols to the assigned physical channel resources. The SSCH module can be configured to interleave the message symbols among the assigned physical channel resources to introduce diversity to the signal.

[0092] The symbols modulate the OFDM sub-carriers, and the modulated sub-carriers are transformed to OFDM symbols that are transmitted to the various access terminals. The SSCH module allows a fixed bandwidth FDM channel to be used for signaling and feedback messages while allowing flexibility in the amount of power overhead that is dedicated to the channel.

[0093] It should be noted that while Figure 4 illustrates generating SSCH transmissions including signaling, acknowledgement, power control, and assignment messages one or more of these, along with one or more other message types may be utilized in place of the arrangement described.

[0094] Figure 5 illustrates aspects of another method 500 of generating signaling messages in a communication system with a shared signaling channel. The method 500 may begin at block 510 where logical control channel resources are assigned to physical channel resources. The logical control channel resources are distinct from logical traffic channel resources assigned to physical channel resources for data transmission. In certain aspects, the distinction may be provided assigning logical resources only to signaling channel. In other aspects, these resources may be reserved for the signaling channel, but allow the system, e.g. the scheduler, to assign any unused logical resources reserved to the signaling channel to data transmissions. Further, the logical resources may be nodes of a channel tree, hop ports of a frequency hop algorithm, or other logical resources. In certain aspects, the physical channel resources correspond to sub-carriers, OFDM symbols, or combinations of sub-carriers and OFDM symbols.

[0095] The assignment of the resources may vary according to one or more frequency hopping algorithms utilized. These hopping algorithms may vary for the logical resources assigned to signaling and data channels, e.g. different channel trees may be utilized for the logical signaling channel resources and the logical data channel resources. Further, each of the different types of signaling channel resources, e.g.

signaling, acknowledgement, power control, and assignment, may have distinct logical resources, or may all be arbitrarily or deterministically mapped to the logical, or physical after assignment, resources assigned to the signaling resources.

[0096] Signaling messages may then be generated, block 520, and encoded, block 530. The messages are then transmitted based upon a mapping of symbols corresponding to the messages to the physical channel resources assigned to the logical signaling channel resources, block 540. The signaling messages may be of signaling, acknowledgement, power control, assignment, or other types. Further, a single message may have multiple signaling message types, e.g. a unicast message may have signaling, acknowledgments, and power control information for a particular user.

[0097] Additionally, power control of the signaling messages or symbols thereof may be performed by SSCH module by adjusting or otherwise scale the amplitude of the encoded messages or symbols.

[0098] Although Figure 5 depicts assignment occurring prior to symbol modulation and encoding, the orders of the three functions may be independent, e.g. reversed or contemporaneous, with respect to the three other functions.

[0099] It should be noted that in some cases, e.g. where a same channel tree is used for both signaling, e.g. SSCH, logical resources, and data logical resources, a scheduler may assign a logical resource reserved for signaling for data channels. In such cases, the logical resource will be dropped from the transmission resources assigned to the terminal. Alternatively, a re-assignment may also be possible, e.g. each assignment of a logical resource reserved for signaling has one or more related logical resources to which data assignments are transferred, when a data channel is assigned to the logical resource reserved for signaling.

[0100] Figure 6 illustrates aspects of a simplified apparatus 600 for generating signaling messages in a communication system with a shared signaling channel. The apparatus includes means 610 for assigning logical control channel resources to physical channel resources. The logical control channel resources are distinct from logical traffic channel resources assigned to physical channel resources for data transmission. In certain aspects, the distinction may be provided assigning logical resources only to signaling channel. In other aspects, these resources may be reserved

for the signaling channel, but allow the system, e.g. the scheduler, to assign any unused logical resources reserved to the signaling channel to data transmissions. Further, the logical resources may be nodes of a channel tree, hop ports of a frequency hop algorithm, or other logical resources. In certain aspects, the physical channel resources correspond to sub-carriers, OFDM symbols, or combinations of sub-carriers and OFDM symbols.

[0101] The assignment of the resources may vary according to one or more frequency hopping algorithms utilized. These hopping algorithms may vary for the logical resources assigned to signaling and data channels, e.g. different channel trees may be utilized for the logical signaling channel resources and the logical data channel resources. Further, each of the different types of signaling channel resources, e.g. signaling, acknowledgement, power control, and assignment, may have distinct logical resources, or may all be arbitrarily or deterministically mapped to the logical, or physical after assignment, resources assigned to the signaling resources.

[0102] Apparatus 600 includes means 620 for generating signaling messages and means 630 for encoding the signaling messages. The messages are then transmitted based upon a mapping of symbols corresponding to the messages to the physical channel resources assigned to the logical signaling channel resources by transmitter 640. The signaling messages may be of signaling, acknowledgement, power control, assignment, or other types. Further, a single message may have multiple signaling message types, e.g. a unicast message may have signaling, acknowledgements, and power control information for a particular user.

[0103] Additional, power control of the signaling messages or symbols thereof may be performed by means such as power control module 238.

[0104] The various illustrative logical blocks, modules, and circuits described in connection with the aspects disclosed herein may be implemented or performed with a general purpose processor, a digital signal processor (DSP), a Reduced Instruction Set Computer (RISC) processor, an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), a field programmable gate array (FPGA) or other programmable logic device, discrete gate or transistor logic, discrete hardware components, or any combination thereof designed to perform the functions described herein. A general purpose processor may be a

microprocessor, but in the alternative, the processor may be any processor, controller, microcontroller, or state machine. A processor may also be implemented as a combination of computing devices, for example, a combination of a DSP and a microprocessor, a plurality of microprocessors, one or more microprocessors in conjunction with a DSP core, or any other such configuration.

[0105] The steps of a method, process, or algorithm described in connection with the aspects disclosed herein may be embodied directly in hardware, in a software module executed by a processor, or in a combination of the two.

[0106] A software module may reside in RAM memory, flash memory, non-volatile memory, ROM memory, EPROM memory, EEPROM memory, registers, hard disk, a removable disk, a CD-ROM, or any other form of storage medium known in the art. An exemplary storage medium is coupled to the processor such the processor can read information from, and write information to, the storage medium. In the alternative, the storage medium may be integral to the processor. Further, the various methods may be performed in the order shown in the aspects or may be performed using a modified order of steps. Additionally, one or more process or method steps may be omitted or one or more process or method steps may be added to the methods and processes. An additional step, block, or action may be added in the beginning, end, or intervening existing elements of the methods and processes.

[0107] The above description of the disclosed aspects is provided to enable any person of ordinary skill in the art to make or use the disclosure. Various modifications to these aspects will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art, and the generic principles defined herein may be applied to other aspects without departing from the spirit or scope of the disclosure. Thus, the disclosure is not intended to be limited to the aspects shown herein but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and novel features disclosed herein.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

CLAIMS

1. A method of generating control channel messages in a wireless communication system, the method comprising:

assigning logical control channel resources to physical channel resources to create assigned physical channel resources, wherein the logical control channel resources are distinct from logical traffic channel resources assigned for data transmission and the physical channel resources correspond to combinations of sub-carriers and OFDM symbols;

generating at least one message;

encoding the at least one message to generate at least one message symbol; and

transmitting the at least one message on at least a portion of the assigned physical channel resources.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising controlling a power density of the at least one message.

transforming the plurality of sub-carriers, including at least one sub-carrier within the assigned physical channel resources, to an OFDM symbol; and
transmitting the OFDM symbol over a wireless communication link.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein assigning comprises assigning based in part on a frequency hopping algorithm.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the logical control channel resources comprise nodes of a channel tree and assigning comprises mapping the nodes to a sub-carriers and OFDM symbols.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein mapping comprises mapping the nodes based in part on a frequency hopping algorithm.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the logical control channel resources comprise a number of logical resources that may vary between a minimum and a maximum and wherein assigning comprises selecting a number of logical resources for control channel resources between the minimum and the maximum.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising releasing any logical resources between the maximum and the number of selected logical resources for assignment to traffic channels.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein generating at least one message comprises generating at least one assignment block message directed to a plurality of access terminals.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the at least one assignment block message comprises a broadcast MACID.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein generating at least one message comprises generating at least one acknowledgement (ACK) message in response to a received transmission from an access terminal.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein generating at least one message comprises generating at least one reverse power link control message directed to a particular access terminal.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining if at least one logical control channel resource is assigned for data transmission, and if the at least one logical control channel resource is assigned to data, then cancelling the assignment.

13. An apparatus configured to generate signaling channel messages in a wireless communication system, the apparatus comprising:

a scheduler configured to assign logical signaling channel resources to physical channel resources to provide assigned physical channel resources, wherein the logical control channel resources are distinct from logical traffic channel resources assigned to traffic channels that are assigned for data transmission and the physical channel resources correspond to combinations of sub-carriers and OFDM symbols;

a signaling module configured to generate at least one signaling message;
and

a transmitter coupled to the scheduler and the signaling module, the transmitter configured to transmit the at least one signaling message utilizing at least some of the assigned physical channel resources.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the scheduler is configured to assign the physical channel resources based in part on a frequency hopping algorithm.

15. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the logical control channel resources comprise nodes of a channel tree and wherein the scheduler is configured to map the nodes to sub-carriers and OFDM symbols.

16. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the at least one signaling message comprises a broadcast signaling message directed to a plurality of access terminals.

17. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the logical control channel resources comprise nodes of a channel tree and wherein the scheduler is configured to map the nodes to a sub-carriers and OFDM symbols.

18. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the logical control channel resources comprise a number of logical resources that may vary between a minimum and a maximum and wherein the scheduler is configured to select a number of logical resources for control channel resources..

19. The method apparatus of claim 18, wherein the scheduler is configured to release any logical resources between the maximum and the number of selected logical resources for assignment to traffic channels.

20. An apparatus for generating control channel messages in a wireless communication system, the apparatus comprising:

means for assigning logical control channel resources to physical channel resources to generate assigned physical channel resources, wherein the logical control channel resources are distinct from logical traffic channel resources assigned for data transmission and the physical channel resources correspond to combinations of sub-carriers and OFDM symbols;

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means for generating at least one message;
means encoding the at least one message to generate at least one message symbol; and

a transmitter configured to transmit the at least one message on at least a portion of the assigned physical channel resources.

21. The apparatus of claim 19, further comprising means for controlling a power density of the at least one message.

22. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the means for assigning comprises means for assigning based in part on a frequency hopping algorithm.

23. The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the logical control channel resources comprise nodes of a channel tree and the means for assigning comprises means for mapping the nodes to a sub-carriers and OFDM symbols.

24. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the means for mapping comprises means for mapping the nodes based in part on a frequency hopping algorithm.

25. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the logical control channel resources comprise a number of logical resources that may vary between a minimum and a maximum and wherein the means for assigning comprises means for selecting a number of logical resources for control channel resources.

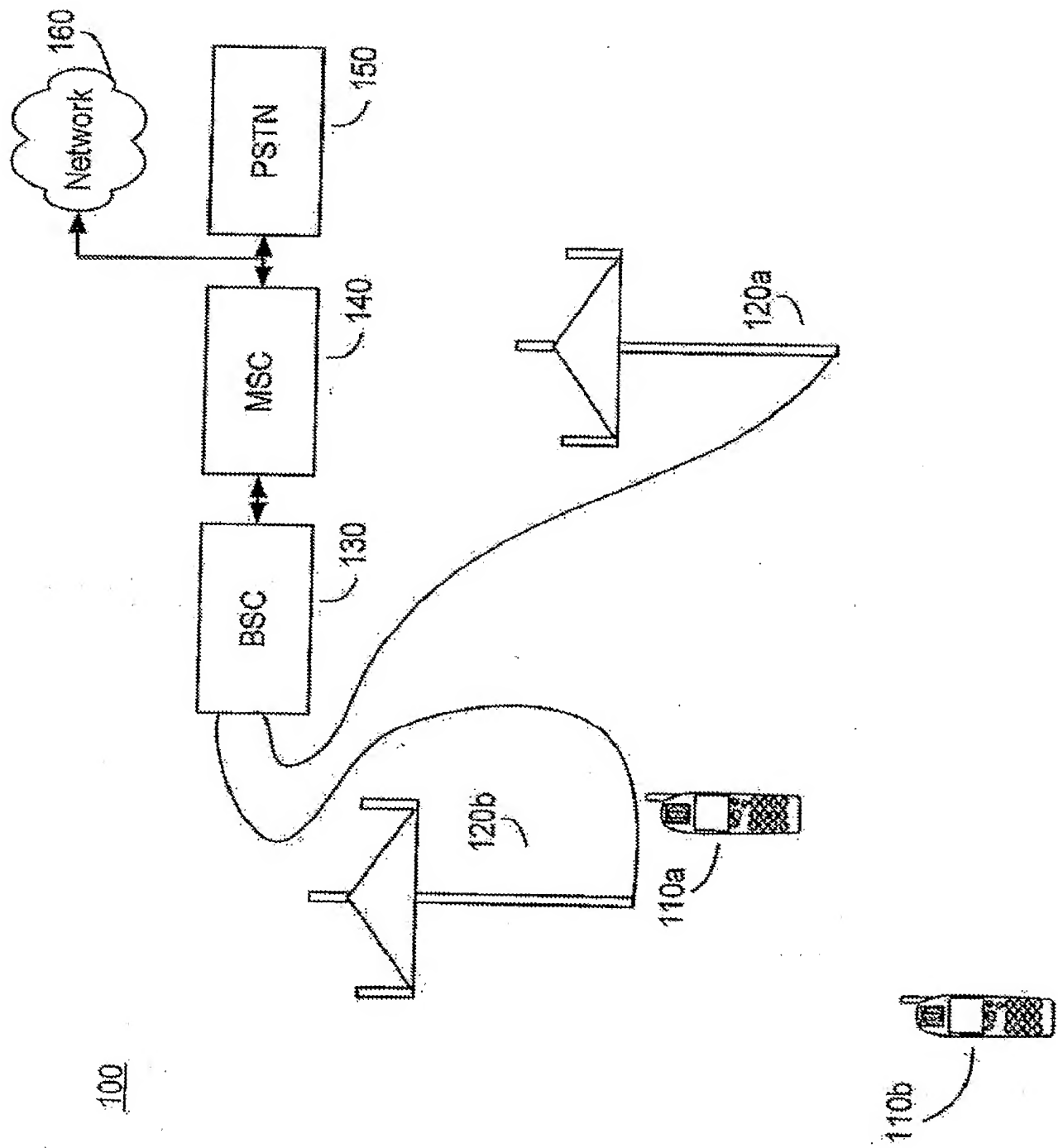


FIG..1

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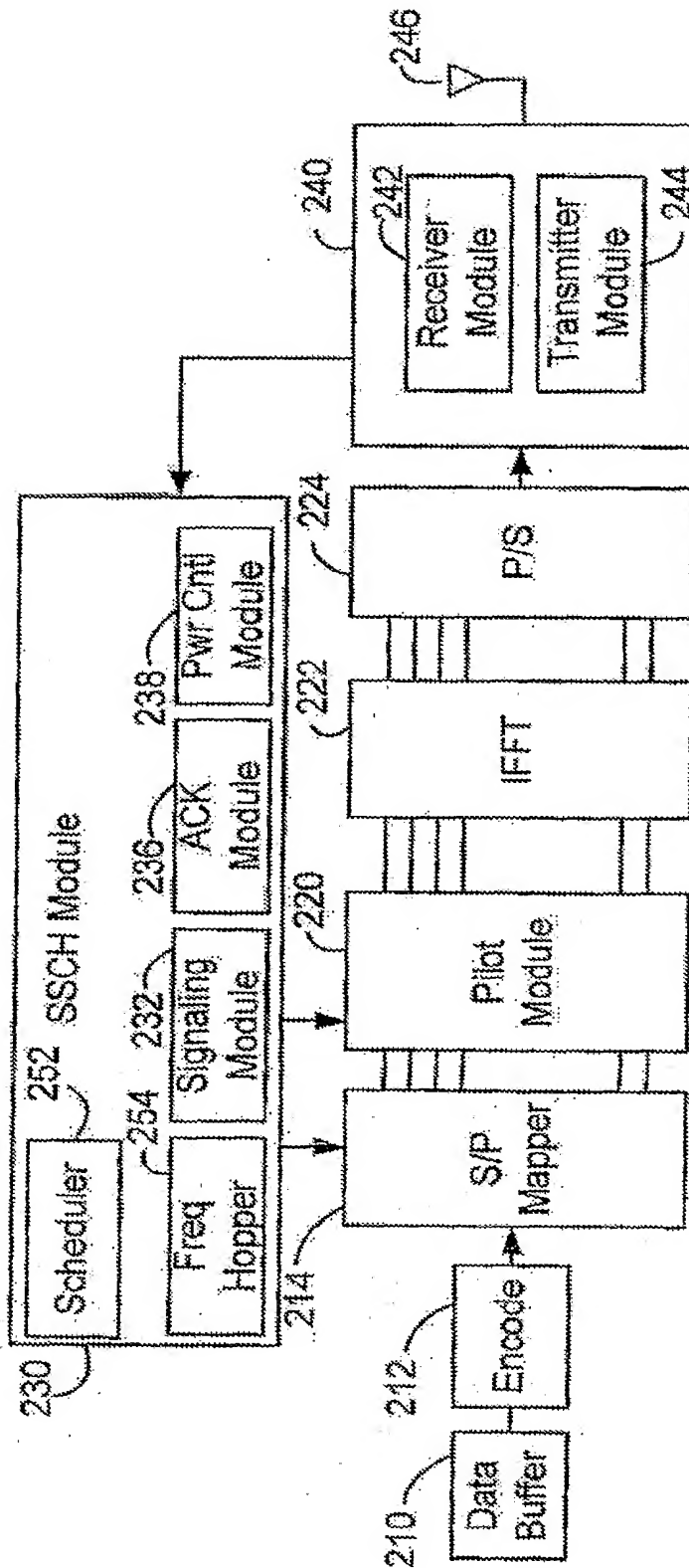
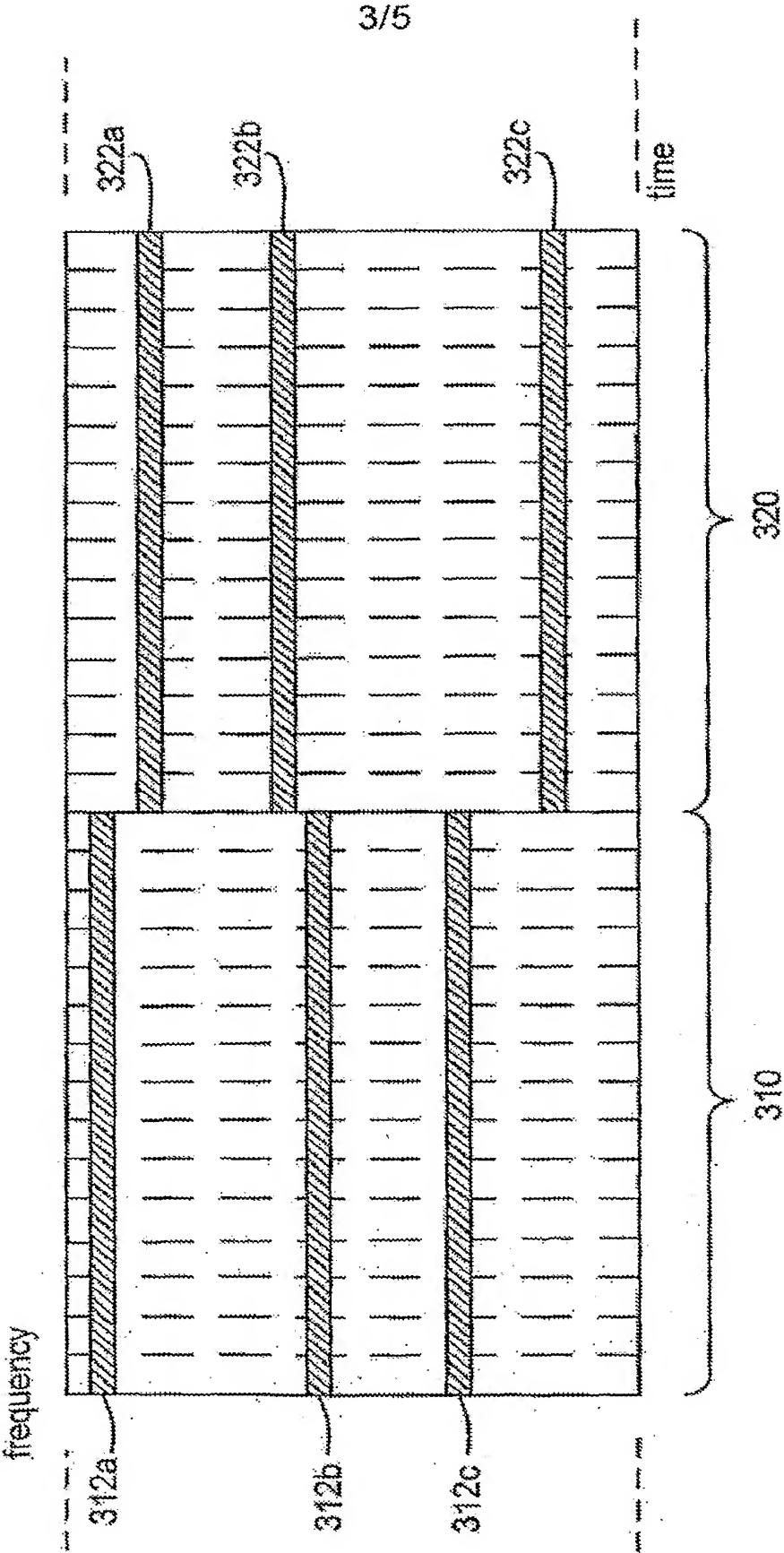
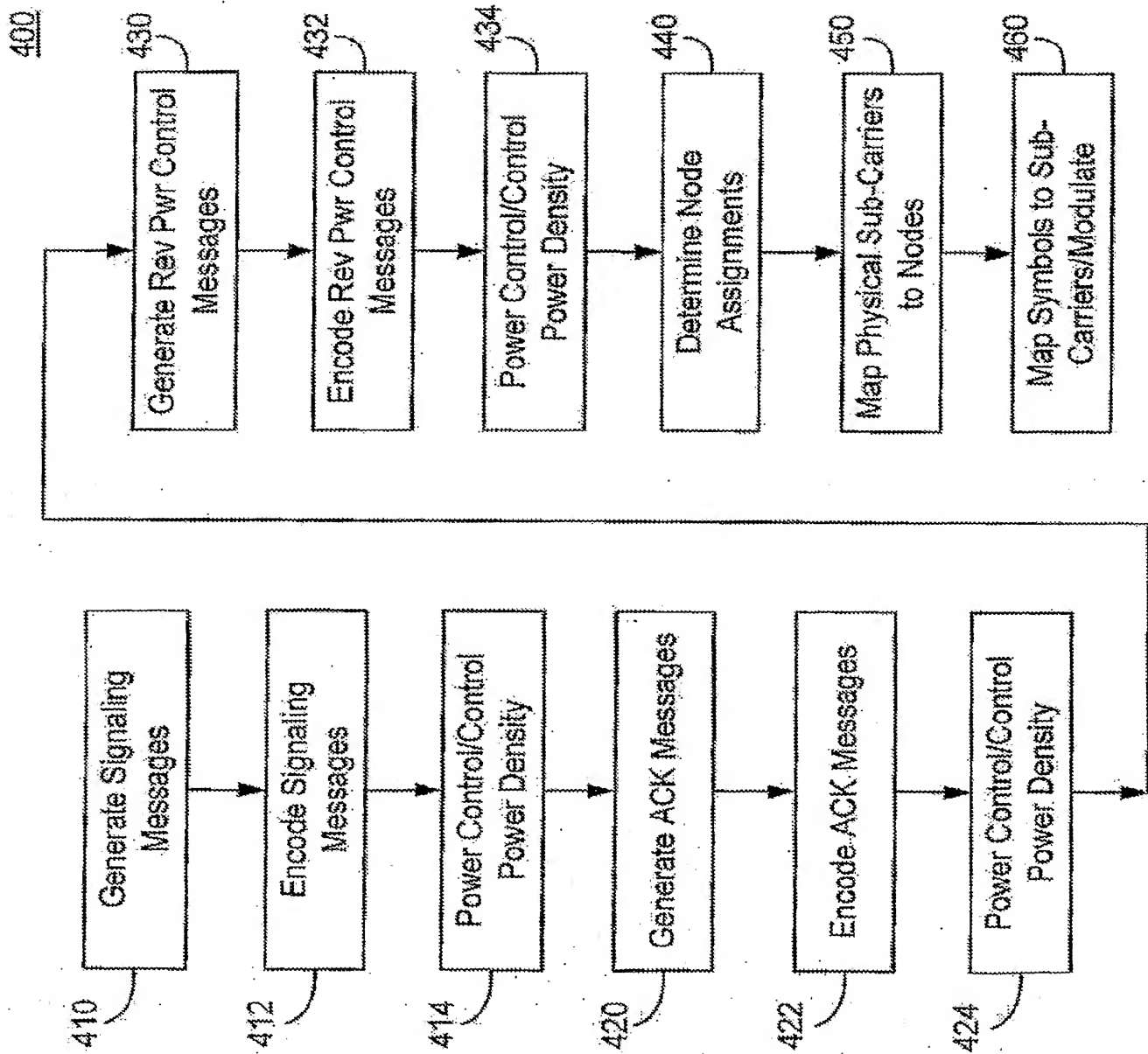


FIG..2

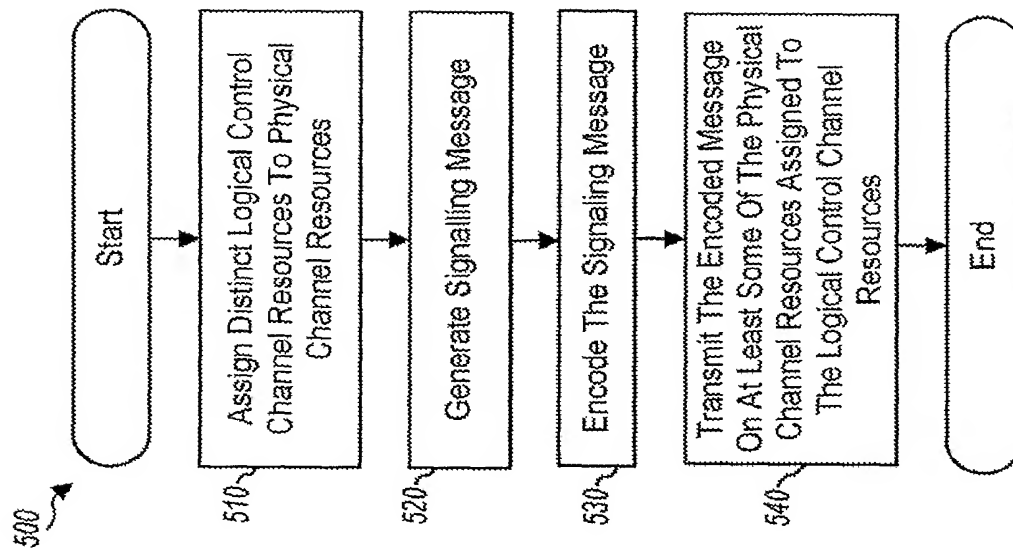
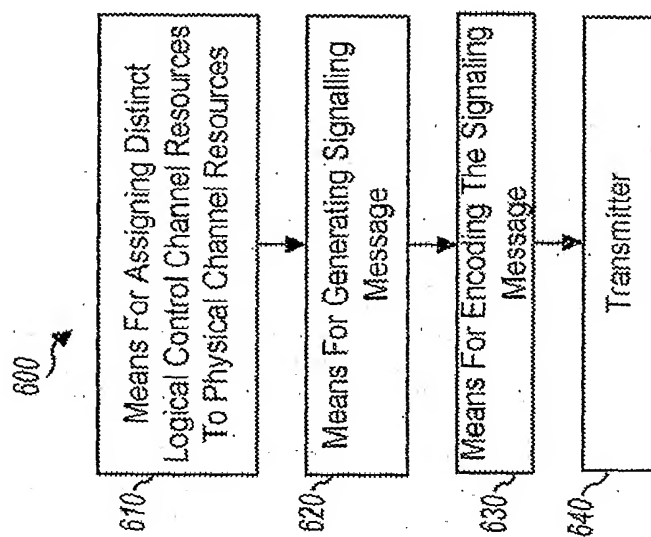
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*Figure 5**Figure 6*